WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

 1.   A method of managing access to a trading network, comprising:

receiving from a client application a first network login request for a first user, the first login request including first authentication information;

5   approving the first network login request based at least on the first authentication information, wherein approving the first login network request authorizes the first user to access the trading network;

identifying from a plurality of users one or more associated users for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy, the one or more identified associated

10   users including a second user;

obtaining user profile information for the second user, the user profile information including information regarding the second user that can be used to allow the first user to engage in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of the second user; and

15   communicating the user profile information to the client application.

2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from the client application a second network login request for the second user; and

20   approving the second network login request to authorize the second user to access the trading network.

3.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the first user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

25

4.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

identifying, based at least on the received first authentication information, one or more trading systems to which the first user is authorized access; and

communicating to the client application a list of the identified trading systems.

30

5.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the user profile information identifies one or more trading systems to which the second user is authorized access for trading activity.

6.   The method of Claim 5, wherein the user profile information identifies, for each identified trading system, one or more parameters defining the permitted trading activity for the second user in that trading system.

7.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the user profile information identifies whether the second user is a passive trader or an active trader, wherein the first user may engage in trading activity on behalf of a passive trader regardless of whether the passive trader is logged into the trading network, and wherein the first user may engage in trading activity on behalf of an active trader only if the active trader is logged into the trading network.

8.   The method of Claim 1,

wherein the first user is a first broker;

wherein the method further comprises storing a set of broker-trader relationships, each broker-trader relationship defining a relationship between one of a plurality of brokers and one of a plurality of traders, the plurality of brokers including the first broker and the plurality of traders including the plurality of users; and

wherein the one or more associated users for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy are identified by identifying from the set of broker-trader relationships each broker-trader relationship between the first broker and any one of the plurality of traders.

9.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an attachment request from the client application, the attachment request associated with a particular trading system and including a request to establish a user relationship between the first user and the second user;

5   in response to the attachment request, establishing a user relationship between the first user and the second user; and

establishing an association between the user relationship and a connection with the particular trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established association allow

10   the second user to engage in trading activity in the particular trading system on behalf of the second user.

10.   The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

receiving an additional attachment request from an additional client

15   application associated with a third user, the additional attachment request comprising a request to establish an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user;

in response to the attachment request, establishing an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user; and

20   establishing an additional association between the additional user relationship and the connection with the particular trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the particular trading system on behalf of the second user.

25

11.   The method of Claim 10, wherein the third user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

12.   A system for managing access to a trading network, the system comprising an authentication manager operable to:

receive from a client application a first network login request for a first user, the first network login request including first authentication information;

5   approve the first network login request based at least on the first authentication information, wherein approving the first network login request authorizes the first user to access the trading network;

identify from a plurality of users one or more associated users for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy, the one or more identified associated users

10   including a second user;

obtain user profile information for the second user, the user profile information including information regarding the second user that can be used to allow the first user to engage in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of the second user; and

15   communicate the user profile information to the client application.

13.   The system of Claim 12, wherein the authentication manager is further operable to:

receive from the client application a second network login request for the

20   second user; and

approve the second network login request to authorize the second user to access the trading network.

14.   The system of Claim 12, wherein the first user is a broker that is

25   prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

15.   The system of Claim 12, wherein the authentication manager is further operable to:

identify, based at least on the received first authentication information, one or

30   more trading systems to which the first user is authorized access;

communicate to the client application a list of the identified trading systems.

16.   The system of Claim 12, wherein the user profile information identifies one or more trading systems to which the second user is authorized access for trading activity.

17.   The system of Claim 16, wherein the user profile information identifies, for each identified trading system, one or more parameters defining the permitted trading activity for the second user in that trading system.

18.   The system of Claim 12, wherein the user profile information identifies whether the second user is a passive trader or an active trader, wherein the first user may engage in trading activity on behalf of a passive trader regardless of whether the passive trader is logged into the trading network, and wherein the first user may engage in trading activity on behalf of an active trader only if the active trader is logged into the trading network.

19.   The system of Claim 12,
wherein the first user is a first broker;
wherein the authentication manager is further operable to store a set of broker-trader relationships, each broker-trader relationship defining a relationship between one of a plurality of brokers and one of a plurality of traders, the plurality of brokers including the first broker and the plurality of traders including the plurality of users; and
wherein the one or more associated users for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy are identified by identifying from the set of broker-trader relationships each broker-trader relationship between the first broker and any one of the plurality of traders.

20.   The system of Claim 12, further comprising a broker proxy server operable to:

receive an attachment request from the client application, the attachment request associated with a particular trading system and including a request to establish a user relationship between the first user and the second user;

in response to the attachment request, establish a user relationship between the first user and the second user; and

establish an association between the user relationship and a connection with the particular trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established association allow the second user to engage in trading activity in the particular trading system on behalf of the second user.

21.   The system of Claim 20, wherein the broker proxy server is further operable to:

receive an additional attachment request from an additional client application associated with a third user, the additional attachment request comprising a request to establish an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user;

in response to the attachment request, establish an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user; and

establish an additional association between the additional user relationship and the connection with the particular trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the particular trading system on behalf of the second user.

22.   The system of Claim 21, wherein the third user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

23. A method of managing access to a trading network, comprising:

receiving at a broker proxy server an attachment request from a client application associated with a first user, the attachment request including a request to attach the first user to a second user, the attachment request indicating whether the

5   second user is a passive trader or an active trader;

establishing and storing a user relationship between the first user and the second user;

if the attachment request indicates that the second user is a passive trader, establishing a first association between the user relationship and a first connection

10   between the broker proxy server and a trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established first association allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the first connection; and

if the attachment request indicates that the second user is an active trader:

15   determining whether the second user is logged into the trading system; and

if it is determined that the second user is logged into the trading system, establishing a second association between the user relationship and a second connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established second

20   association allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the second connection.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein the first connection and the second connection are the same connection such that an association is established between

25   the user relationship and a particular connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system regardless of whether the second user is a passive trader or an active trader.

25. The method of Claim 23, further comprising preventing the first user

30   from engaging in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user if it is determined that the second user is not logged into the trading system.

26. The method of Claim 23, wherein if it is determined that the second user is not logged into the trading system, the method further comprises:

waiting to receive a trading system login request from the second user;

receiving the trading system login request from the second user; and

in response to receiving the trading system login request from the second user, establishing a third association between the user relationship and a third connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established third association allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the third connection.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein the third connection and the second connection are the same connection such that an association is established between the user relationship and a particular connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system regardless of whether the second user is logged in at the time the attachment request is received or logs in at a later time.

28.   The method of Claim 23, wherein the first user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

29.   The method of Claim 23, further comprising determining whether the second user is authorized to attach to the first user.

30.   The method of Claim 29, wherein determining whether the second user is authorized to attach to the first user comprises:

communicating an attachment authorization query to an authentication manager, the attachment authorization query identifying the second user and the first user; and

receiving from the authentication manager a determination of whether the second user is authorized to engage in trading activity on behalf of the first user.

31.   The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

receiving an additional attachment request from an additional client application associated with a third user, the additional attachment request including a request to attach the third user to a second user;

establishing and storing an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user;

if the first association is established, establishing an additional association between the additional user relationship and the first connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the first connection; and

if the second association is established, establishing an additional association between the additional user relationship and the second connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the second connection.

5   32.   The method of Claim 31, wherein the third user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

       33.   The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

       receiving from the client application a first network login request for a first

10   user, the first network login request including first authentication information;

       approving the first network login request based at least on the received first authentication information, wherein approving the first network login request authorizes the first user to access the trading network; and

       identifying from a plurality of users one or more associated users, including

15   the second user, for which the first user is authorized to act on behalf of.

       34.   The method of Claim 33, further comprising:

       identifying, based at least on the received first authentication information, one or more trading systems to which the first user is authorized access, the one or more

20   trading systems including the particular trading system; and

       communicating to the client application a list of the identified trading systems.

40

35.   The method of Claim 33,

wherein the first user is a first broker;

wherein the method further comprises storing a set of broker-trader relationships, each broker-trader relationship defining a relationship between one of a plurality of brokers and one of a plurality of traders, the plurality of brokers including the first broker and the plurality of traders including the second user; and

wherein the one or more associated users for which the first user is authorized to act on behalf of are identified by identifying from the set of broker-trader relationships each broker-trader relationship between the first broker and any one of the plurality of traders.

36.   The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

receiving a logoff notification that the first user is logged off of the trading network;

in response to receiving the logoff notification, detaching the second user from the first user by removing from storage the user relationship between the first user and the second user.

37.   The method of Claim 36, further comprising:

after removing the relationship from storage, receiving a logon notification that the first user is logged on to the trading network; and

in response to receiving the logon notification, automatically re-attaching the first user to the second user at least by re-establishing and re-storing the user relationship between the first user and the second user.

38.   The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

receiving from the client application a first network login request for a first user, the first network login request including first authentication information;

approving the first network login request based at least on the received first authentication information, wherein approving the first network login request authorizes the first user to access the trading network;

identifying from a plurality of users one or more associated users, including the second user, for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy;

obtaining user profile information for the second user, the user profile information including information regarding the second user that can be used to allow the first user to engage in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of the second user; and

communicating the user profile information to the client application.

39.   A system of managing access to a trading network, the system comprising a broker proxy server operable to:

receive at a broker proxy server an attachment request from a client application associated with a first user, the attachment request including a request to attach the first user to a second user, the attachment request indicating whether the second user is a passive trader or an active trader;

establish and storing a user relationship between the first user and the second user;

if the attachment request indicates that the second user is a passive trader, establish a first association between the user relationship and a first connection between the broker proxy server and a trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established first association allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the first connection; and

if the attachment request indicates that the second user is an active trader:

determine whether the second user is logged into the trading system; and

if it is determined that the second user is logged into the trading system, establish a second association between the user relationship and a second connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established second association allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the second connection.

40.   The system of Claim 39, wherein the first connection and the second connection are the same connection such that an association is established between the user relationship and a particular connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system regardless of whether the second user is a passive trader or an active trader.

41.   The system of Claim 39, wherein if it is determined that the second user is not logged into the trading system, the broker proxy server is further operable to:

wait to receive a trading system login request from the second user;

5   receive the trading system login request from the second user; and

in response to receiving the trading system login request from the second user, establish a third association between the user relationship and a third connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established user relationship and the established third association

10   allow the first user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the third connection.

42.   The system of Claim 41, wherein the third connection and the second connection are the same connection such that an association is established between

15   the user relationship and a particular connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system regardless of whether the second user is logged in at the time the attachment request is received or logs in at a later time.

43.   The system of Claim 39, wherein the first user is a broker that is

20   prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

44.   The system of Claim 39, wherein the broker proxy server is further operable to determine whether the second user is authorized to attach to the first user.

25   45.   The system of Claim 44, wherein determining whether the second user is authorized to attach to the first user comprises:

communicating an attachment authorization query to an authentication manager, the attachment authorization query identifying the second user and the first user; and

30   receiving from the authentication manager a determination of whether the second user is authorized to engage in trading activity on behalf of the first user.

46.   The system of Claim 39, wherein the broker proxy server is further operable to:

receive an additional attachment request from an additional client application associated with a third user, the additional attachment request including a request to attach the third user to a second user;

establish and storing an additional user relationship between the third user and the second user;

if the first association is established, establish an additional association between the additional user relationship and the first connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the first connection; and

if the second association is established, establish an additional association between the additional user relationship and the second connection between the broker proxy server and the trading system;

wherein the established additional user relationship and the established additional association allow the third user to engage in trading activity in the trading system on behalf of the second user via the second connection.

47.   The system of Claim 46, wherein the third user is a broker that is prevented from engaging in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of itself.

48.   The system of Claim 39, further comprising an authentication manager operable to:

receive from the client application a first network login request for a first user, the first network login request including first authentication information;

approve the first network login request based at least on the received first authentication information, wherein approving the first network login request authorizes the first user to access the trading network; and

identify from a plurality of users one or more associated users, including the second user, for which the first user is authorized to act on behalf of.

49.   The system of Claim 39, wherein the broker proxy server is further operable to:

receive a logoff notification that the first user is logged off of the trading network;

in response to receiving the logoff notification, detach the second user from the first user by removing from storage the user relationship between the first user and the second user.

50.   The system of Claim 49, wherein the broker proxy server is further operable to:

receive a logon notification that the first user is logged on to the trading network; and

in response to receiving the logon notification, automatically re-attach the first user to the second user at least by re-establishing and re-storing the user relationship between the first user and the second user.

51.   The system of Claim 39, further comprising an authentication manager operable to:

receive from the client application a first network login request for a first user, the first network login request including first authentication information;

approve the first network login request based at least on the received first authentication information, wherein approving the first network login request authorizes the first user to access the trading network;

identify from a plurality of users one or more associated users, including the second user, for which the first user is authorized to act as a proxy;

obtain user profile information for the second user, the user profile information including information regarding the second user that can be used to allow the first user to engage in trading activity via the trading network on behalf of the second user; and

communicate the user profile information to the client application.